

*Association of Professional Flight Attendants*

*Office of the President*

March 8, 2005

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Federal Communications Commission  
9300 East Hampton Drive  
Capitol Heights, MD 20743

Re: WT Docket No. 04-435

Dear Commissioners:

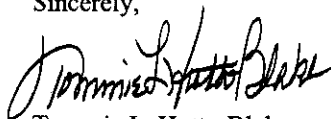
On behalf of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) representing the 24,000 flight attendants at American Airlines, we appreciate your efforts to explore airline passenger use of cellular telephones inflight. We agree that wireless devices have the potential to benefit homeland security, business, and consumers. At the same time, we must express caution. The highest priority must be that crewmembers have wireless communications ability prior to use by passengers and that any passenger device allowed does not interfere with crewmember communications. Airline crewmembers are no better able to communicate today than they were on September 11, 2001. A wireless system is desperately needed for flight attendants to notify the flight crew of potential threats to the aircraft. This must be the foremost consideration.

Cockpit doors were secured in the aftermath of 9/11 so the only way flight attendants can communicate with the flight crew is to go to one end of the aircraft or the other to use a handset – an inflight landline, of sorts. This is a time consuming process and could have prevented the flight attendants from notifying the cockpit of a threat more quickly on September 11, 2001 – when every moment counted.

The security of the aircraft must take precedence over passenger marketing features. After crewmember devices are functioning, then passenger wireless devices could be considered. With that, we have further concerns. As noted in the media, we see the potential for loud talking on cell phones that disturbs surrounding passengers. It will ultimately become the flight attendants' job to handle these situations. For that reason, we will take an active role in asking the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to develop policy for handling such incidents. Several years ago, the FAA outlined criteria for dealing with disruptive passengers. Should passengers be allowed to use cell phones, we will ask the FAA to include "disruptive cell phone" use to the list of actions that are considered interfering with the flight crew. This would subject a disruptive passenger to a warning and, if the passenger does not cease, intervention by authorities meeting the flight. The passenger could also be fined \$25,000.

Thank you for your consideration. We are available to answer any questions on this issue. Please contact Lonny Glover, APFA National Safety Coordinator, at 800-395-2732 Ext. 8302.

Sincerely,

  
Tommie L. Hutto-Blake

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